

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15 NEA-10

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S E C R E T USNATO 3965

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJECT: MBFR: UK OPPOSITION TO U.S. PROPOSALS

BEGIN SUMMARY: AT AUGUST 22 SENIOR POLADS MEETING, UK REP INTRODUCED EXTENSIVE DELEGATION-LEVEL AMENDMENTS TO INITIAL INTERNATIONAL STAFF DRAFT OF ALLIANCE POSITIONS ON MBFR. AMENDMENTS STRENGTHENED UK OPPOSITION TO U.S. SUBSTANTIVE AND PROCEDURAL APPROACH, INDICATING THAT BRITISH ARE PREPARING FOR VERY HARD BARGAINING IN FORTHCOMING SPC AND COUNCIL CONSULTATIONS. UK GAINED NO APPRECIABLE SUPPORT FROM OTHER ALLIES, BUT CONTINUED VIGOROUS BRITISH OPPOSITION WILL NECESSARILY SLOW DOWN PROCESS OF OBTAINING ALLIED CONSENSUS ON MBFR APPROACH. END SUMMARY

1. SENIOR POLADS MET ON AUGUST 22 FOR UNINSTRUCTED REVIEW OF INITIAL INTERNATIONAL STAFF DRAFT OF COMPREHENSIVE PAPER "ALLIANCE APPROACH TO NEGOTIATIONS ON MBFR." MOST REPS, INCLUDING U.S., COMMENTED MOST FAVORABLY ON I.S. DRAFT WHICH CLEARLY SETS FORTH VARIOUS NATIONAL POSITIONS BUT IS
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STRUCTURED AROUND U.S. JULY 27 PROPOSALS. BULK OF LENGTHY REVIEW, HOWEVER, WAS DEVOTED TO EXTENSIVE UK AMENDMENTS.

2. I.S. DRAFT ALREADY CONTAINED FAMILIAR BRITISH POSITIONS

ON SEVERAL MAJOR POINTS OF DISAGREEMENT WITH U.S.
SPECIFICALLY, IT INCLUDED UK VIEWS THAT:

A) NATO REDUCTIONS SHOULD NOT EXCEED 10 PERCENT OF U.S. FORCES;

B) ALLIED PROPOSAL SHOULD NOT BE SPECIFIC IN MANPOWER TERMS;

C) SOME "MEASUREMENT" OF COMBAT CAPABILITY SHOULD BE
EXPLICITLY ASSOCIATED WITH REDUCTIONS;

D) FURTHER WORK REMAINS TO BE DONE BEFORE A NATO NEGOTIATING
POSITION CAN BE ESTABLISHED ON PRE-REDUCTION STABILIZING MEASURES
OR ON STABILIZING MEASURES TO ACCOMPANY REDUCTIONS;

E) WITHDRAWN SOVIET FORCES SHOULD BE DISBANDED AND NOT
REPLACED; AND

F) ALLIED NEGOTIATING STRATEGY SHOULD BE BASED ON CAREFUL
EXPLORATION OF SOVIET POSITIONS THROUGH AN EFFORT TO REACH
AGREEMENT ON A FULL AGENDA, BEFORE SUBMITTING SPECIFIC
PROPOSALS.

3. IN ADDITION TO ENSURING THAT I.S. DRAFT STATED FOREGOING
BRITISH VIEWS AS STRONGLY AS POSSIBLE, UK REP (SMITH)
PROPOSED ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS, SOME OF WHICH SEEMED DESIGNED
MORE TO STRENGTHEN UK HAND AGAINST U.S. APPROACH THAN AS ITEMS
SERIOUSLY TO BE PRESENTED TO THE SOVIETS. IN DESCRIBING CHARACTER
OF "ALLIED POSITION" (SECTION II), UK INSISTED ON DEFINING
THIS AS AN "OUTCOME" AND A "BASIC," "FUNDAMENTAL" POSITION.
UK SAW "ALLIED POSITION" AS DEFINING OUTER LIMITS OF WHAT
MIGHT ULTIMATELY BE ACCEPTABLE TO ALLIES, RATHER THAN AS A
STATEMENT OF AIMS. HE REJECTED ARGUMENT BY BELGIAN REP
(WILLOT) THAT BRITISH APPROACH WOULD DEPRIVE ALLIES OF ANY
NEGOTIATING FLEXIBILITY.

4. UK REP INSISTED ON USE OF PHRASE "SOME MEASUREMENT" OF
COMBAT CAPABILITY RATHER THAN "SOME MEASURE," DESPITE
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OBSERVATION BY MILITARY COMMITTEE REP (ADMIRAL MINTER)
AND OTHERS ON NEAR-IMPOSSIBILITY OF DEVELOPING ANY AGREED
YARDSTICK FOR MEASURING COMBAT CAPABILITY. SMITH INTRODUCED
PARAGRAPH CALLING FOR AN INTERNAL ALLIED AGREEMENT TO FIX A
"FLOOR" BELOW WHICH ALLIED REDUCTIONS SHOULD NOT GO. HE ALSO
ADDED, AS A NEW PRE-REDUCTION STABILIZING MEASURE, AN AGREED
DEFINITION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF "UNDIMINISHED SECURITY" --
AGAIN DESPITE DOUBTS OF OTHERS OVER TRYING TO NEGOTIATE A COMMON
DEFINITION OF THIS TERM.

5. PRINCIPAL RESULT OF UK AMENDMENTS WAS THE ADDITION OF
NUMEROUS BRACKETS TO TEXT. DOCUMENT STILL REPRESENTS A USEFUL
NEXT STEP TOWARDS DEVELOPMENT OF AN ALLIANCE POSITION AND

WILL BE THE BASIS FOR SUBSEQUENT NATO CONSULTATIONS. TEXT AS REVISED BY SPC WILL BE AVAILABLE SHORTLY AND WE WILL TRANSMIT IT TO WASHINGTON TOGETHER WITH COMMENTS ON SPECIFIC TEXTUAL POINTS.

6. COMMENT: THE MAIN PURPOSE OF VIGOROUS BRITISH OPPOSITION TO U.S. SUBSTANTIVE AND PROCEDURAL PROPOSALS MAY WELL BE TO STAKE OUT A FIRM BARGAINING POSITION FOR COUNCIL DISCUSSIONS IN WEEKS AHEAD IN ORDER TO GET ALLIED AGREEMENT TO A HIGHLY CAUTIOUS APPROACH TO MBFR. WE WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY LONDON'S COMMENTS ON FIRMNESS OF BRITISH POSITIONS AND UNDERLYING MOTIVATIONS.
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